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ART. VIII.—*Sketches of Algiers, Political, Historical, and Civil ; containing an Account of the Geography, Population, Government, Revenues, Commerce, Agriculture, Arts, Manufactures, Tribes, Manners, Languages, and recent Political Events of that Country.* By WILLIAM SHALER, American Consul General at Algiers. Boston. Cummings, Hilliard, and Co. 1826. 8vo. pp. 308.

DURING the last three centuries, the Algerine government has exercised no small degree of influence in the affairs of Europe ; and yet few countries on the globe, visited by civilized men, have been less known, than that region on the south shore of the Mediterranean, denominated the Kingdom of Algiers. A hundred years ago, Dr Shaw resided twelve years in the city of Algiers, as Chaplain to the English factory there, and his learned book of travels affords almost the only source of information, which has since been resorted to. As a work illustrating the classical history and antiquities of the country, this is undoubtedly most accurate and judicious ; but it throws very little light on the origin, progress, and character of the Algerine government, its maxims, policy, and aims, its sustaining force and effects ; nor on the manners and habitudes of the people, their social and moral condition, their agriculture and commerce, institutions, intelligence, and pursuits. Dr Shaw was a scholar and antiquarian, but not a practised observer of human affairs, nor a politician. This may be said, without detracting from his great merits in the departments of learning, and branches of inquiry, in which he is universally acknowledged to have excelled.

But since the time of Dr Shaw, many changes have occurred in Algiers, of which history has taken but an imperfect record, and which have operated with a decided influence on the people and the forms of government. Nor, indeed, is it too much to say, that there has been as little known to the world at large, down to the present day, about the internal state of Algiers, as of its condition when the chief power was usurped by the elder Barbarossa, or when the romantic enterprise of Charles the Fifth, in attacking the city, met with so signal and ruinous a defeat. In the midst of this poverty of knowledge respecting a nation, which, however unjustly, with whatever violation of the sacred laws of humanity, has been allowed to play a conspicuous part for centuries in European politics, it is gratifying, that

a gentleman of Mr Shaler's qualifications and opportunities should have given his thoughts to the subject, and laid before the world the results of his observations and long experience. He has resided ten years in Algiers, as Consul General from the United States, and in that capacity been engaged in important negotiations with the government, and enjoyed every possible advantage for acquiring information. His work was written on the spot. He has studied the policy of the civilized governments, in their intercourse with the Barbary powers, and become familiar with the springs, which have moved the Christian nations to their extraordinary and persevering alliances with these hordes of pirates, and professional plunderers of the human race. Mr Shaler has drawn aside the veil, which concealed these dark and disgraceful proceedings, and shown, that the piratical states themselves have always existed, as a mere mockery of properly and legally organized governments, the deep reproach of a civilized age ; and he has, moreover, shown, that the European powers, in courting and sustaining treaties of alliance with them, have been actuated, could be actuated, by no other than the lowest motives of selfishness, jealousy of rival influence, and mercenary aims.

There never was a time, when any one of the great maritime powers of Europe could not have routed these bands of pirates from their strong holds, driven them into the deserts, or expelled them, as enemies of the human kind, from the face of the earth. Yet they have been suffered to exist, to assume rights, to claim the dignity and privilege of civilized governments, to make treaties and break them at will, to prey upon the commerce of every nation, to enslave their prisoners, exact tribute, levy exorbitant contributions, impose degrading terms of submission, and, in short, to commit every act of infamy and injustice, to which their cupidity and daring spirit of evil prompted them. All these things have been quietly endured, nay, winked at, encouraged, promoted, by the nations themselves who were the subjects of these shameless insults, and whose duty it was for their own honor, and the honor of human nature, to punish such gross infractions of right, and crush the audacious power that dared commit them.

The existence of the piratical states of Barbary, as governments tolerated by civilized nations, is an anomaly in the history of the world. They have never, till very recently, made any pretensions to an observance of the laws of nations. Their

primary political maxim has been, that they were naturally at war with all Christian nations, who did not purchase a peace at a heavy price, and maintain it by a degrading annual tribute. This was the way the United States first made peace with them, and to our shame be it spoken, we were tributaries to these despicable robbers till within the last twelve years. But not only did they trample on the laws of nations, in this fundamental article of peace and war, but they made slaves of their prisoners, and demanded for them an exorbitant ransom. Treaties they regarded not, any longer than it suited their convenience. A pretext for breaking a treaty was always at hand, and from that moment war was understood to exist, without any previous declaration or notice to the other party concerned. Then the Corsairs began their depredations, scoured the Mediterranean, seized every vessel that came in their reach, and brought it into port, where the cargo was confiscated, and the crew condemned to slavery. Instead of chastising such an outrage, as its infamy deserved, the insulted nation deemed it policy to sue again for peace, to pay an enormous sum by special agreement and in presents as the price of conciliation, to redeem the prisoners in slavery, and submit to the humiliating condition of sending an annual tribute to a band of freebooters. Thus were treaties made and broken merely as a means of plunder, and thus did the mutual jealousies, the contemptible policy, of the European powers, not only give countenance to each other in such humbling practices, but maintain in their consequence for ages these bloodthirsty enemies of the human family.

Mr Shaler's work is confined to the kingdom of Algiers, touching on the other Barbary states only as they bear a general analogy to this. He begins with a geographical view of the country ; its soil, productions, and population. He then comes to its history and form of government ; political and civil institutions ; finances, army, and navy ; its piratical character, and political relations with foreign powers. Next we have a description of the city of Algiers, its topography, fortifications, public edifices, private dwellings, and streets ; its commerce, wealth, and police ; the character and manners of the people, their arts and manufactures, and the condition of the Christian and Jewish residents. Then follows a description of the various tribes inhabiting the kingdom of Algiers, their peculiarities, religion, and languages ; and also a very animated sketch of the history of the Algerine government during the last fifteen years. The main body of

the work is closed by some interesting reflections of the author on the probable destiny of that country, as highly favored by nature, as it is miserably degraded by its government. A supplementary chapter contains extracts from the American Consular Journal kept at Algiers, narrating a series of curious events, illustrative of the genius of the government, and its habits of intercourse with foreigners. In the Appendix are thrown together several documents of value.

The territory usually known as the Kingdom of Algiers, stretches along the south shore of the Mediterranean about five hundred miles, from the eastern border of the Empire of Morocco, to the western boundary of Tunis. Its breadth inland from the sea is very uncertain, but is supposed to vary from forty to a hundred miles. The surface thus included, by Mr Shaler's estimate, is in extent about thirty thousand square miles, being not quite half as large as the state of Virginia. The amount of population is not known, as no enumeration has been taken, but our author considers it not far from a million. This would make thirtythree persons to a square mile, or about the average of the state of Delaware. This region embraces ancient Numidia, and that part of Mauritania Tingitana, which, after its conquest by Cæsar, was called Mauritania Cæsariensis. It was the land of heroic deeds, the domain of powerful kings, renowned for its opulent cities, and brave, though artful and treacherous inhabitants. At length it was subdued by the arms of Rome, and became a dependent province of that empire. It was here that the Romans fought and conquered

Numidia's hardy troops,
Mounted on steeds, unused to the restraint
Of curbs and bits, and fleetier than the winds.

Sallust, the historian, was once governor of this province; and to this circumstance, probably, we are indebted for his beautiful history of the wars in Africa. The celebrated Christian Father, Augustin, was also born in this region, and resided, as bishop of Hippo, in the eastern part of Algiers, near the present site of Bona.

Nature has been bountiful here; the climate is agreeable and salubrious; the surface of the country is variegated with hills and valleys; the soil is fertile, yielding abundantly the products of the most favored climes. The industry and moral energies of man, and a government giving scope to these, are all that is wanting to build up communities of prosperous and happy peo-

ple. Internal protection, and external commerce, unshackled by monopolies and vexatious restrictions, would make this belt of land between Mount Atlas and the Mediterranean sea, one of the most productive, wealthy, and populous portions of the globe. Wheat and barley are cultivated with success; olives and dates are abundant, and of the best quality; and also the walnut and chesnut, figs, pomegranates, grapes, and other fruits of temperate climates. The only metallic products as yet discovered are iron and lead. Fossil salt is found in the mountains. As the country is well watered by springs and small streams, though not abounding in rivers, it affords excellent pasturage and facilities for the rearing of camels, horses, neat cattle, sheep, goats, and other domestic animals. Wool is now an important article of commerce. The various species of the winged tribe and of game, usual in similar climates of other countries, are common here. But on this topic we need not enlarge; Numidia is famed in ancient story for its fine climate and productive soil; nor, during the long ages in which this soil has been defiled with human bloodshed, and disgraced by the monsters nourished by it, has nature withdrawn her gifts, or turned away her smiles.

Man seems the only growth that dwindles here.

Little profit would be gained in pursuing the thread of Algerine history from the Romans downward. These proud conquerors of the world were driven from their African possessions by the Vandals, and these again were expelled by the great general, Belisarius, under the Emperor Justinian, about the middle of the sixth century. A hundred years afterward another revolution was effected by the Saracens. From that time till the beginning of the sixteenth century, a veil of darkness is spread over human events in the north of Africa, through which we dimly discover various tribes of Arabs, the Zinhagians, the Zeneti, and the Marabouts, contending with the Saracens and with one another, for the mastery of the country. Meantime the Spaniards made incursions, and established themselves at Oran, and other cities in the neighborhood of that place; and this period, that is, the early part of the sixteenth century, presents an important era in Algerine history.

Among the renowned personages of that day were Horuc and Hayradin, sons of a potter in the Isle of Lesbos, whose restless spirit drove them to the perilous and thrifty occupation

of pirates. In this calling they gained fame and wealth, collected a strong naval force, ravaged the seas, and spread the terror of their name in every corner of the Mediterranean. Horuc, the elder brother, was called Barbarossa, and this chief of the pirates was the ally to whom Eutemi, king of Algiers, applied to aid him in expelling the Spaniards from Oran. The proposal was joyfully accepted by Barbarossa, who repaired immediately to Algiers with five thousand men. He was received with enthusiasm, and, by his profuseness and artifices, so strong a footing did he gain with the people, that he murdered Eutemi, usurped his authority, and declared himself king of Algiers. He ruled with cruelty, and made war on the king of Tremecen, whom he vanquished, and whose dominions he seized. Two years after his usurpation, he was slain by the Spaniards, in attempting to escape from Tremecen.

His brother Hayradin, not inferior to him in talents and ambition, succeeded to the throne of Algiers. He was likewise called Barbarossa. Thus the dynasty of the pirates was established, and from that day to this the sceptre of empire, however legitimate may have been the descent of power, has been wielded by the hand of a pirate. This second Barbarossa, finding himself harassed by the Arabs and Moors on one side, and by the Spaniards on the other, sought the protection of the Grand Seignior, and Algiers became a dependency of the Ottoman Porte. This relation has subsisted under various modifications ever since. It was a wise step for Barbarossa; he obtained forces to drive away his enemies, and even strengthened his power by conquests. His successful attack on Tunis, and his subsequent expulsion from that city by Charles the Fifth, are curious events in the history of those times; and not less so is the hazardous expedition of Charles against Algiers, five or six years later, in conjunction with the great admiral, Andrew Doria, which terminated in a disastrous and total failure.

Barbarossa was raised to the dignity of Bashaw of the empire, and a new viceroy appointed over Algiers. The Porte exercised the power of appointing governors, till the beginning of the seventeenth century, when the Algerines, weary of the oppression of their foreign masters, obtained the privilege of choosing their own governors, who were from that period called *Deys* by Europeans. They still paid tribute to the Grand Seignior, and submitted to the authority of the Bashaws appointed by him; but in the year 1710, they expelled the Turkish Bashaw, and from

that time the powers of this office were united with that of the Dey, and the form of government was instituted, which has continued to the present time.

The Algerine government, as it now exists, cannot be better described, than in the words of Mr Shaler.

‘It is in fact,’ says he, ‘a military republic with a chief elective for life, and upon a small scale resembling that of the Roman Empire after the death of Commodus. This government ostensibly consists of a sovereign chief, who is termed the Dey of Algiers, and a Divan, or great Council, indefinite in point of number, which is composed of the ancient military who are or have been commanders of corps. The Divan elects the Deys, and deliberates upon such affairs as he chooses to lay before it.

‘Such is the theory of the Algerine Government. The credit and importance of the Divan would naturally vary according to the character and abilities of the reigning sovereign; it was formerly a real corps in the state, held regular sessions, had funds attributed to it, and claimed to determine upon all the measures of government; but it has dwindled into a mere phantom; its existence even would be doubtful if, in the year 1816, Omar Pashaw had not formally convened the Divan to deliberate upon the negotiations of the Regency with Great Britain. Since the removal of the residence of the Deys of Algiers into the Citadel, the Divan may be regarded as a dead letter in their constitution. The Dey appoints his own ministers, which are the Hasnagée, whose authority extends over the national finances and interior concerns; the Aga, who is commander in chief, and may be termed minister of war; the Vikel Argée, or minister of marine and foreign affairs; the Khodgia de Cavallas, who may be denominated Adjutant General, and superintendant of the national domain; and the Bet el Mel, or judge of inheritances. The post of the latter functionary has risen to great consideration on account of its pecuniary importance. These ministers form the cabinet council of the sovereign, and with him constitute in fact the real government of Algiers, free of any control by the pretended Divan. The election of the Deys of Algiers should be confirmed by the Grand Seignior, who is their acknowledged Suzerain (paramount lord). This recognition is never refused, and is by custom given with the rank of Bashaw of three tails, which is his ordinary title. That of Dey is hardly known in Algiers, and is used only by foreigners; it was probably originally a nickname, as its literal meaning in the Turkish language is simply, “uncle.”

‘The Deys of Algiers assume and exercise all the rights of

sovereign authority immediately on their election ; their solemn installation takes place only when they receive the firman of the Grand Seignior recognising their election, with the Kaftan and sabre of state, which are usually sent as soon as may be by a Capidgi Bashi or state messenger. In times of prosperity Algiers sends a present to the Grand Seignior once in three years, which is usually transported there with their ambassador by a foreign ship of war ; and such is still the credit of the Regency, that it is always the government most favored here, which obtains this mission as a mark of honorable preference. This present is always magnificent, often amounting in value to half a million of dollars ; and it appears to be the only dependence which they recognise upon the Ottoman government, whose flag even, in the intoxication of their fancied power, they have not always respected. In return for these presents the Porte usually sends them a vessel of war, with military and naval stores, &c. and gives them permission to recruit in its dominions.

‘ Though the election of the Dey of Algiers is by the institutions of the Regency vested in the Divan, it is usually the result of the intrigues of a predominant faction amongst the Janissaries, and is generally a sanguinary tragedy. A Dey is murdered to make room for some more fortunate adventurer ; his immediate friends and adherents perish, or are plundered and exiled, and the public business or tranquillity is not interrupted beyond twenty-four hours. These revolutions succeed each other with a rapidity, which can hardly be credited by those who are unacquainted with the barbarous character and manners of the Turks. A Dey of Algiers, while alive, is the most despotic and implicitly obeyed monarch on earth ; but his reign is always precarious, and it is by *mere accident* if he dies a natural death. Any Turk who has been regularly enrolled in the corps of Janissaries is eligible to the eminent post of Dey, except the natives of Bosnia and of Crete ; no other qualifications are required, and the caprice of fortune has sometimes raised the most obscure and ignoble characters to the throne. Tradition points out the graves of seven adventurers who were raised to the throne and perished on the same day ; as a mark of contempt they were interred in the public highway. Neither can a person elected refuse or resign the honor of ruling in Algiers ; he must either reign or perish.’ pp. 16—19.

The kingdom of Algiers is divided into three provinces, Oran on the west, Titterie in the middle, and Constantine on the east. Each of these provinces is governed by a Bey appointed by the Dey. These subordinate officers rule with the same despotic

sway as their sovereign. They are required to collect the taxes from the people, and once in three years to appear in person at the seat of government, when they are expected to give enormous presents to all the persons high in power, to secure their own continuance in office. 'I am informed on respectable authority,' says the author, 'that each visit of the Beys of Oran and Constantine costs to those governors not less than three hundred thousand dollars. On these occasions it is necessary to bribe all the officers of the Regency, according to the different degrees of their credit and influence. No part, however, of these extraordinary contributions goes into the public treasury.' Here we have the secret of the extreme oppression, practised by these Beys on the people. The continuance of their office depends on their success in plundering those under them, and on this principle is the administration of government conducted through all its departments, from the highest to the lowest. Power is employed to sustain itself, by extorting from the weak the means of bribing the more powerful, and this in addition to the amount necessary to gratify the rapacity of the subordinate officers themselves.

The government of Algiers exhibits a very extraordinary peculiarity, as to the mode in which it is perpetuated. It is a rule seldom violated, that all the principal officers shall be taken from among the foreigners, who have been incorporated into the body of Janissaries. The desire of establishing a hereditary succession, or of keeping up a family influence, which has been so strong in other ages and countries, and which may perhaps be considered a trait deeply seated in human nature, seems never to have shown itself here. Children derive no consequence from the station their fathers have held; and the whole mass of the natives of the country, that is, nearly a million of people, have submitted for three centuries to be ruled and scourged by a handful of foreigners, consisting of Turks and renegadoes collected commonly from the most worthless population in the Levant, who, as Mr Shaler says, 'are generally the sweepings of prisons, and the refuse of society in those barbarous countries.' The number of these foreigners now embodied in Algiers is about four thousand.

'Agents are maintained by the Regency in Constantinople and Smyrna to engage recruits and charter vessels for their transportation hither. On their arrival they become *ipso facto* soldiers, are denominated Janissaries, and are incorporated into the differ-

ent barracks of the city, to which they are supposed to belong during life, whatever may be their subsequent fortunes. In these quarters, if not called by some happy accident into the administration, they rise by seniority to the highest grade of pay, and become members of the pretended Divan; where they must be very inept indeed, if they do not obtain some profitable employment.

‘The pay of the Janissaries at its commencement, on their arrival as recruits from the Levant, hardly exceeds half a dollar per month, but by length of service is gradually increased to about eight dollars, which is the maximum. Of late years, however, it has been a common practice of the Deys of Algiers to augment the pay of the Janissaries, in order to enhance their popularity. A corps thus constituted, is of course always ripe for a revolution. Their rations consist of about two pounds of indifferent bread daily, and all who are unmarried are lodged in very spacious and commodious barracks; they find their own clothing, and their own arms and ammunition, which latter are furnished to them by the government at moderate prices. A Janissary, when equipped for battle, has one or more pairs of large pistols in his belt, with his scimitar or yatagan, a dagger in his bosom, and a long musket on his shoulder; all which are as highly ornamented as his circumstances will permit. When, costume included, he is not unfairly represented by the knave of diamonds in a pack of cards.’ pp. 27, 28.

From this description of persons the Deys are chosen, and all the great officers of state appointed.

The military establishment is composed of natives, as well as Turks, and amounts to about fifteen thousand men. They are stationed in different parts of the country, and employed chiefly in collecting the revenue. These are distinct from the Janissaries, and very loosely organized. The naval force consists of three frigates, two corvettes, two armed brigs, five schooners, one polacre, and one xebec; in all, fourteen vessels.

To illustrate the mutation of human affairs in Algiers, arising out of the peculiar nature of the government, Mr Shaler relates the following anecdote.

‘During the summer of my arrival here, an old Turk called on me, announcing himself as a Rais, or Captain in the navy; and informed me that he had made a voyage from this place to Constantinople, with Commodore Bainbridge, as attached to the Algerine legation carried there by that officer in former times. He expressed the most friendly regard for the Commodore, and to inquire after his health and welfare appeared to be the principal

object of his visit ; but on taking leave, he informed me that he had no employment, and was very poor, and requested me to lend him a dollar, which I did, and assured him that whenever his necessities required it, he might apply to me with the certainty of finding such relief as I had it in my power to give him. I afterwards frequently met this old gentleman on public occasions, when he would modestly offer me a friendly pinch of snuff at a respectful distance from the official characters I was visiting. A few years after, this old man was raised to the eminent post of Haganagee, or prime minister, which he now holds, at the age of about ninety years, and is in the receipt of at least fifty thousand dollars per annum.' pp. 31, 32.

The depredations of the Algerines on the commerce of the United States began early. According to their custom of being at war with all Christian nations, who did not purchase a peace, they declared war against us immediately after the recognition of our independence by the European powers. In July, 1785, two American merchant vessels, one commanded by Captain Stevens, and the other by Captain O'Brien, were seized by the corsairs, and taken to Algiers, where the officers and men, amounting in the whole to twentyone persons, were consigned to slavery. For the ten years following, our commerce was protected against these pirates by the Portuguese, who were at war with them, and who kept a maritime force in the Straits of Gibraltar, sufficient to prevent the Algerine cruisers from passing into the Atlantic ocean. Meantime various expedients were resorted to, by the government of the United States, to redeem their unfortunate countrymen from slavery. These all proved unsuccessful, chiefly on account of the exorbitant demands of the pirates. It was thought not more a dictate of policy, than of benevolence, to refrain from gratifying these demands, as a compliance to this effect would operate as an additional incitement to future aggressions. The amount required for the ransom of twentyone persons was fiftynine thousand four hundred dollars. An effort was made to negotiate for the redemption of the prisoners, through the society of Mathurins in Paris, instituted for the purpose of redeeming Christian captives from infidels, but the attempt was ineffectual. Eight years were thus consumed, without coming to any terms with Algiers, or rescuing these American citizens from bondage.

Affairs assumed a new aspect in 1793, when a truce between Portugal and Algiers was stipulated through the mediation of the

British government. This opened a passage for the corsairs into the Atlantic, and in a few months they captured eleven American vessels, containing one hundred and nine officers and seamen, who were all reduced to slavery. From that time more earnest exertions were made to procure a peace with Algiers, and the sympathy of the country was universally awakened in behalf of the suffering captives. The business was entrusted to Colonel Humphreys, the minister from the United States to Portugal, who despatched Mr Joseph Donaldson to Algiers, as commissioner to negotiate a treaty of peace. A time, more unpromising to the interests of the United States for executing such a treaty, could hardly have occurred. The truce with Portugal, and peace with other powers, had left the Dey's corsairs almost without employment. M. Skjoldebrand, brother of the Swedish Consul in Algiers, who had been consulted in this matter, wrote to Colonel Humphreys as follows. 'The Dey declared to me, that his interest does not permit him to accept your offers, even were you to lavish millions upon him. Because, said he, if I were to make peace with every body, what should I do with my corsairs? They would take off my head for the want of other prizes, not being able to live upon their miserable allowances.' Mr Donaldson succeeded, however, in forming a treaty, (September, 1795,) on terms as degrading to the American nation, as they were necessary in the exigencies of the case. The United States became bound to pay the Regency of Algiers upwards of seven hundred thousand dollars, as the price of peace and the ransom of the captives, and to render an annual tribute, payable in military and naval stores, the entire charges of which would amount to above seventy thousand dollars yearly.*

Owing to the difficulty of procuring funds, the conditions of the treaty were not fulfilled so soon as the Dey expected. He became impatient, expressed apprehensions that the delay was intentional, and threatened to renew the war and send out his cruisers. In this extremity, the American Commissioners, Joel Barlow and Mr Donaldson, agreed that their government should make the Dey a present of a frigate, if he would wait three months longer. This proposal was acceded to, and before the three months had expired, the requisite funds were received.

* By the Purveyor's Estimate returned to the Secretary of the Treasury in 1796, the cost of the two first years' annuities to the Dey and Regency of Algiers was \$144,246.

Thus was a peace concluded with Algiers, which cost the United States first and last more than a million of dollars, and left them tributary to a horde of pirates.*

This treaty continued in force till 1812, when it suited the Dey's policy to break it, and to adopt a course, which, says Mr Shaler, 'has drawn upon the Algerines, either directly or indirectly, greater calamities than they ever before encountered, and its effects will probably cease only with the extinction of their independence as a piratical power.' The motives inducing to this step need not here be developed.

'The epoch which was selected by the reigning Dey of Algiers for a declaration of war against the United States, gave to it a character of the most deliberate and determined hostility. On the seventeenth of July of the above year, (1812,) an American ship called the *Alleghany*, arrived here with the tribute in military and naval stores, which was then due from the United States to the Regency. This vessel was received with demonstrations of apparent satisfaction, and was begun to be unloaded, when the Dey sent for the invoices and bills of lading of all her cargo. When they were explained to him, he expressed the utmost discontent at not finding the quantity of powder, and large cables, that he pretended to have positively required, and great indignation at the same vessel having been made the means of conveyance of some gunbarrels for Morocco, that were landed at Gibraltar, and of some small quantities of private property; which he affected to regard as personally disrespectful.

'He ordered, in consequence, that the Consul should pay in cash the amount due from the United States to the Regency, and depart on the twentyfifth of the same month, with his family and all American citizens that might be here, on pain of the ship and cargo being confiscated, and himself, his family, and his countrymen here, reduced to slavery. The Consul, keeping steadily in view what he regarded as the interests of his country, made all proper remonstrances against this arbitrary proceeding, but in vain, and was compelled to depart on the day named. In September following, a small American brig, of little value, with a crew of eleven persons, was sent into Algiers as a prize to their

* The correspondence between ministers, consuls, agents, and other persons, and also the Messages of the President, and Reports of the Secretary of State, respecting the relations between the United States and Algiers, down to the period of ratifying this treaty, may be found among the 'Confidential Documents,' published in the tenth volume of *American State Papers*.

cruisers. This insignificant prize proved to be the only advantage that they ever obtained from a war which they had declared with so much arrogance, and, in their opinion, with prospects of the most brilliant success. In the following year, the American government made an indirect attempt to ransom their captives in the power of the Algerines, who positively rejected any negotiation on the subject, alleging that they regarded their American slaves as above any pecuniary ransom.' pp. 120—122.

During the war with England, which existed at this period, the attention of our government was but partially drawn to these outrages of the Algerines; but as soon as peace was restored, by the ratification of the treaty of Ghent, the Congress of the United States declared war against the Regency of Algiers, and made such appropriations as to render the means of conducting it prompt and efficient. The degradation of paying tribute to lawless banditti, and of being subjected to their caprice, was no longer to be endured. A squadron was fitted out for the Mediterranean, under the command of Captains Bainbridge and Decatur, and these two commanders were appointed commissioners, conjointly with Mr Shaler, to propose and conclude a treaty of peace. The first division of this squadron, under Commodore Decatur, with Mr Shaler on board, sailed from New York in May, 1815. Early in the succeeding month they arrived in the Mediterranean, and soon captured an Algerine frigate and brig. A few days afterward, the squadron appeared off Algiers, and the two commissioners propounded to the Regency the terms on which they were authorized to renew the peace. At that time the Algerine cruisers were at sea, and such was the imposing attitude of the American squadron, and the impression made by the recent captures, that the conditions dictated by the commissioners were immediately assented to. From the date of this treaty, all tribute from the United States to these pirates was abolished, the laws of nations were recognised, and the American government was ever after to stand on the same footing, as the most favored nations. The captured frigate and brig were by agreement given up to the Dey.

After this treaty was concluded, Mr Shaler landed in Algiers as Consul General from the United States, which station he has held ever since. The Dey, stimulated probably by the agents of a foreign power, sought a pretence to break the treaty, and renew hostilities; but the differences were settled by the prudent management of the Consul, and peace has not since been

interrupted. While the present policy of the European governments exists, however, it is necessary for the United States to keep a respectable naval force in the Mediterranean, to impress on these depredators the certainty, that any attempts to resort to their old practices will meet with a prompt and exemplary chastisement. In short, however much the causes are to be deprecated, yet it is a truth of no small moment, that the service to which our navy has been called, in humbling the Barbary pirates, has been a primary source of its own increase, and of our character and prowess as a nation.

In the year 1816, Algiers was bombarded by the combined English and Dutch fleets, under command of lord Exmouth, with entire success. Peace was made on such terms as the admiral chose to dictate. By one article of the treaty, Christian slavery was forever after abolished in Algiers. It is about fifty years since private cruising for prisoners, with the view of enslaving them, was prohibited. It then became a monopoly of the government. Whatever may be the fate of the treaty just mentioned, the spirit of the age will hardly allow this practice to be renewed for any length of time. The powers, which are still disgraced by a tribute to the Algerine pirates, are Naples, Sweden, Denmark, and Portugal, each of which pays annually twentyfour thousand dollars, besides presents, and other tokens of degradation, whenever there is a change of consuls.

Mr Shaler's third chapter is devoted to a full, instructive, and highly entertaining description of the city of Algiers. After a residence there of ten years in a public station, with no ordinary habits of practical and philosophical observation, he must have been peculiarly well qualified for writing such an account. Whoever reads it, with all the reasonable expectations excited by these circumstances, will not be disappointed. The topography of the city, its fortifications, public buildings, and police, as well as the character of the people, their pursuits, and customs, receive a brief and discriminative examination.

Algiers is situate on the side of a hill, which rises by a sudden ascent from the seashore, and, as the houses are whitewashed, it has a brilliant and picturesque appearance when approached from the sea. It is surrounded by a high wall; the streets are extremely narrow, and the houses flat roofed, after the eastern fashion. The fortifications of the harbor are so formidable, as to make an attack by ships alone a hazardous undertaking. They have been strengthened since lord Exmouth's bombard-

ment. The Casaubas, a strong citadel, commands the town and the batteries.

The population of the city was estimated at one hundred thousand by Dr Shaw, and some other writers have placed it one third higher, but our author thinks it does not exceed fifty thousand. The public buildings consist of nine mosques, three colleges, five bagnios, barracks for the Turkish soldiers, bazars, or market places, and the palace formerly occupied by the Deys. The city is governed by officers distinct from those, who administer the government of the kingdom, and these officers are commonly natives. This local city government is highly commended by the author, who observes, that 'there is probably no city in the world, where there is a more vigilant police, where fewer cognizable crimes are committed, or where there is better security for person and property.' This statement exhibits a singular contrast with the barbarous tyranny of the Turkish rulers, but Mr Shaler is particular in discriminating between the character of the native Algerines, and their Turkish masters. He thinks wrong impressions have gone abroad, respecting the natives. 'They are,' says he, 'a people of very insinuating address, and in the common relations of life, I have found them civil, courteous, and humane.' He speaks, moreover, of their toleration. Although superstitious, and rigidly attached to the Mohammedan faith and ceremonies, yet they manifest no special hostility to those, who adopt different modes of faith and worship.

The train of circumstances, connected with the mode of government in this country, has produced a peculiar effect on the state of property.

'A consequence of the uninterrupted prosperity of Algiers, for so long a course of years, has been the accumulation of great wealth in private families, through their alliances by marriage with the Turks. Thus, though all the power is exclusively in the hands of the latter, the fortunes which they acquire are gradually absorbed into the native families, where they generally remain unmolested. Nothing can be more insecure than the fortune of a living Turk; but that of a native, who is ineligible to any important public employment, and consequently passive in all political revolutions, is as well protected here as in any other country. From the operation of these causes, Algiers may be regarded as one of the richest cities in metallic wealth in the world. The aged widow of Achmet Pashaw, with whom the United States concluded their first peace with the Regency, lately died here, and is reputed to have left a fortune of several

millions of dollars. The heirs of Mustapha Pacha, his successor, from whom the Consular dwelling of the United States is rented, possess real estate in the city and immediate neighbourhood, worth half a million of dollars. Both of these chiefs were publicly executed.' p. 53.

As all the great officers of the government have for centuries exercised their power to grasp and hoard, and as the families of these persons have rarely left the country, it is easy to see that large fortunes must have been accumulated in the hands of individuals. It was only necessary that laws, suitable for protecting property thus acquired, should exist and be respected, which it seems has been the case. The hoarded treasures of the Dey are estimated at fifty millions of dollars.

Various customs, prevailing among the people, are described by the author. We select his account of that relating to marriage.

'Ladies of condition seldom or never walk abroad. Though these secluded dames bloom as it were in the desert, from the complaints of their husbands respecting their extravagance in dress, it may be inferred, that they exercise no inconsiderable portion of influence in society, and are perhaps silently preparing the public mind for a restoration of the rights, of which barbarism and ignorance have defrauded them.

'There are few Algerines who avail themselves of the Mohammedan law which allows a plurality of wives; they are generally contented with one, to whom however is attached a number of black female slaves, according to the wealth and dignity of the parties. Marriages in general in Algiers are contracted much as elsewhere in Mohammedan countries; but the nature of their government, and the consequent condition of the superior classes, have had a silent and sure effect in favour of the sex. It is unreasonable to suppose that a rich heiress, and there are always many in Algiers, would be delivered up as a slave to the caprice of the barbarian who espouses her; conditions are therefore made in the marriage contract, which place her on a certain equality with her husband, or at least protect her from arbitrary ill treatment. It would be injurious to the understandings of the ladies to suppose, that they have not improved these advantages; their effects have been gradually extended, and the consequence has been, that the Moorish women are less slaves to their husbands, than to custom and long received notions of decorum and propriety.

'Marriages are planned and contracted through the agency of the mothers and female relations of the parties, the women of

Algiers having a free intercourse with each other, either at their own houses or at the public baths, which are much frequented by them, and in the afternoon they are sacred to their use. Marriages amongst the superior classes are frequently celebrated by the women with much eclat. On these occasions, the female relations and friends of the parties assemble together and enjoy themselves during several days, to the utter discomfiture of the men, who are then either driven out of the house, or to hide themselves in some corner, where they can neither see nor be seen by the joyous band.' pp. 62, 63.

We have before observed, that there are colleges in Algiers. These, as far as we can learn, are a sort of Mohammedan theological seminaries, designed for instructing persons in the doctrines of that faith, and qualifying them to be priests in the mosques, and religious teachers of the people. It is creditable to the citizens of Algiers, that one of these colleges is exclusively set apart for the instruction of the Kabyles, who are natives of the interior, and reside in the city as servants and laborers. But as the whole extent of Algerine literature is confined to the Koran, and such a thing as a printing press is rarely found in all the regions, where the creed of the Prophet predominates, it is not to be supposed, that the business of education has been carried to a very high degree of perfection.

‘Common schools are, however, numerous in Algiers, where boys of the age of five or six years and upwards, are taught to read and write. From the invariable character of the customs of these countries, I am induced to believe, that their practice is the probable origin of the Lancasterian system of tuition. Each scholar is provided with a board, upon which anything may be fairly written with chalk, and easily effaced; a lesson from the Koran is transcribed in fair and legible characters upon one of these boards, which is then copied upon all the others, the scholars mutually teaching each other, both in the meaning and in the formation of the letters of the text. These lessons are loudly rehearsed to the pedagogue, who sits upon his heels in a corner with a long rod, through the terror of which he maintains order and due attention among his scholars. Thus reading and writing are taught simultaneously, and the beautiful uniformity that characterizes the Arabic handwriting, is probably owing to this method of tuition. The education of the Algerine youth is completed when, having learnt to read and write the Koran, he is duly instructed by the same preceptor in the forms and modes of prayer. The expenses of this course of education are very

trifling, and I am informed that similar schools are kept by women for the instruction of young girls.' pp. 57, 58.

In the city of Algiers are about five thousand Jews, whose condition is far from being enviable.

'They are governed by their own laws in civil cases, administered by a chief of their own nation, who is appointed by the Bashaw; as Algerine subjects they may circulate freely, establish themselves where they please, and exercise any lawful calling throughout the kingdom; and they cannot be reduced to slavery. They pay a capitation tax, and double duties on every species of merchandise imported from abroad; as elsewhere, they practise trade in all its branches, and are here the only brokers and dealers in money and exchanges; there are many gold and silver smiths amongst them, and they are the only artificers employed in the mint.

'Independent of the legal disabilities of the Jews, they are in Algiers a most oppressed people; they are not permitted to resist any personal violence of whatever nature, from a Mussulman; they are compelled to wear clothing of a black or dark colour; they cannot ride on horseback, or wear arms of any sort, not even a cane; they are permitted only on Saturdays and Wednesdays to pass out of the gates of the city without permission; and on any unexpected call for hard labour, the Jews are turned out to execute it. In the summer of 1815, this country was visited by incredible swarms of locusts, which destroyed every green thing before them; when several hundred Jews were ordered out to protect the Bashaw's gardens, where they were obliged to watch and toil day and night, as long as these insects continued to infest the country.

'On several occasions of sedition amongst the Janissaries, the Jews have been indiscriminately plundered, and they live in the perpetual fear of a renewal of such scenes; they are pelted in the streets even by children, and in short, the whole course of their existence here is a state of the most abject oppression and contumely. The children of Jacob bear these indignities with wonderful patience; they learn submission from infancy, and practise it throughout their lives, without ever daring to murmur at their hard lot. Notwithstanding these discouraging circumstances in their condition, the Jews, who through their correspondence with foreign countries are the only class of Algerine society possessing any accurate knowledge of external affairs, meddle with all sorts of intrigue, even at the risk of their lives, which are not unfrequently forfeited in consequence. The post of chief of the Jews is procured and held through bribery and

intrigue, and is exercised with a tyranny and oppression corresponding to the tenure by which it is retained. During the times of prosperity of the Regency, several Jewish houses of trade rose here to great opulence, but of late years, through the intolerable oppression under which they live, many wealthy individuals have been ruined, others have found means to emigrate, and the Moors, who have a singular aptness for trade, are daily supplanting them in the different branches of commerce practicable in this country; so that they appear now to be on a rapid decline even as to their numbers. It appears to me that the Jews at this day in Algiers, constitute one of the least fortunate remnants of Israel existing.' pp. 65—67.

The kingdom of Algiers is inhabited by tribes of men, differing in some essential respects from each other. A large part of the population consists of Moors, a mixed race, descended from the ancient Numidians, or Mauritanians, the Arabs, Spaniards, and Turks, who have from time to time found their way into the country. It is obvious, therefore, that the Moors, as a class, exhibit a great variety of moral and physical traits, according as they are more or less nearly allied to any one of the original stocks, from which they are derived. Besides this compound race, there are other tribes inhabiting the interior of the country, who maintain their distinctive characteristics, such as the Arabs, Biscaries, Mozabis, and Kabyles.

The Arabs are wanderers, as in other regions where they are found, both in Africa and Asia. They live in tents, rear flocks, are governed by their own chiefs, or sheichs, and when they are weary of the oppression of the Beys, or governors of the provinces, they remove farther from their reach, and perhaps go off into the Sahara,* and enjoy an entire independence. The Biscaries are a more quiet people, inhabiting the borders of the desert, yielding submission to the Regency of Algiers, and speaking a broken dialect of the Arabic. The author thinks they were originally of Arabian descent, but have become mingled with the Africans, and assumed their habits. The Mozabis dwell in a distant region at the south, quite beyond the limits of the dominions of the Algerines, and are independent of their government. They have mercantile relations with Algiers; many of them reside there, with specific privileges of trade, and with an Amin, or public officer, who is recognised as consul

* This word, so common in all accounts of Africa, is pronounced with a strongly aspirated accent on the first syllable, *Sah'ara*.

from their nation. But, among the different tribes found in the North of Africa, the Kabyles seem to be the most remarkable. They are otherwise called Berebers. They live in the mountainous districts, independent of the Algerine government, forming a population so numerous, that were they not divided into a great number of small tribes, perpetually at war with each other, they would soon constitute a power too formidable for the Regency to control.

The Kabyles speak a language, called the *Showiah*, having, as far as has been discovered, no resemblance to those spoken by the other tribes, and which, there are many reasons to believe, is of great antiquity. It is supposed to be identified with that of the Tuaricks, who inhabit the interior parts of Libya to the borders of Egypt. Should this position prove correct, and there are strong grounds for sustaining it, the Tuaricks and Kabyles must be considered people of the same origin. That is, the same people and the same language prevail throughout the whole northern range of Africa, from the Atlantic to Egypt, and this people and language show marked peculiarities, which distinguish them from any other now known. Their origin, therefore, becomes a very curious subject of inquiry. The author devotes a few pages to a discussion of the point, which will be read with great interest by those, who are curious in these matters. His opinion is, and he supports it by considerations not easily to be shaken, that the *Showiah* is a language of greater antiquity, than any other spoken in northern Africa. It is remarkable, as he states, that 'every trace of the Roman language appears to have been eradicated by the Saracen conquest.' Nor has it been discovered, that the language in question has any analogy to the Punic, or the Arabic, and of course it must have been formed before the introduction of those tongues into Africa. After a brief, but lucid examination of the question, Mr Shaler concludes, that, from the facts adduced, 'there appears to be nothing unreasonable in believing, that the Tuaricks are an original, unconquered people, and the depository of an ancient language, which, being identified with that of the Kabyles, the *Showiah*, naturally leads to the conclusion, that it is one of the most ancient in the world, which has withstood and survived the conquests of the Carthaginians, the Romans, the Vandals, and the Arabs.' In his Appendix the author has inserted a vocabulary of this language, as far as he has been able to collect it, and he is still pursuing this branch of the in-

quiry. A correspondence between him and Mr Du Ponceau, on this subject, is contained in the volume of *Philosophical Transactions* recently published in Philadelphia.

We should be tempted too far, were we to follow the author in his ingenious speculations, respecting the future destiny of that portion of Africa now subject to Algerine domination. The natural resources of this country, and the prosperity to which it might attain under a mild and equitable government, are set forth by him with a glowing, and we doubt not a judicious pen. His views of colonization seem to us correct ; but to what extent his theory, that it would be expedient and conducive to human happiness and improvement for England to take possession of this region and colonize it, may be approved by the wise and prudent, we venture not to pronounce. His reasonings are not without weight, and we have no disposition to confute them, if we could. And in truth, if we should attempt it and succeed, there would still remain one irresistible argument, which is, that it is impossible for the reins of power to be in worse hands than at present, and therefore any transfer would be a gain, both to the general cause of human advancement, and to the immediate and dearest interests of the people themselves. But, after all, we should be loath to witness the scenes of India acted over in Africa ; and we fear the descendants of the Numidians would be little benefited, even by throwing off the yoke of the pirates, if it must be done by such a mode of release.

Mr Shaler's last chapter contains a selection from the *Journal*, kept in the Consulate of the United States at Algiers. It embraces the chief events in the recent political history of the Regency, particularly in its intercourse with Great Britain, on a threatened abrogation of the treaty, and renewal of hostilities. As the author acted an important part in these events, was himself involved in various intricate and embarrassing circumstances, and personally acquainted with almost every incident he narrates, this selection from his official *Journal* constitutes at once a most valuable, and highly interesting part of his book. It affords an insight into the details of Algerine diplomacy, which, we venture to say, can be obtained from no other quarter. The account given of the Consul's firmness, in resisting the demands of the Regency to give up the defenceless Kabyles under his protection, when the other consuls submitted to the outrage, will be read with warm approbation by every American. It was a measure, on the Consul's part, as bold as it was just, and not

less creditable to his feelings as a man, than it was honorable to his character as the representative of a free nation.

But we would not point to particular parts of this volume, as worthy of exclusive attention. The whole is written with a dignity, a freedom of remark, an independent tone of opinion and investigation, together with an intimate knowledge of the subjects brought under notice, which give it strong claims to respect and confidence ; at the same time it communicates a mass of curious and important facts, not before presented to the reading public. It has not been common for an agent from any country, possessing the author's intelligence, frankness, and talents, to be employed in the diplomatic affairs of the Barbary States ; nay, a capacity for low intrigue, chicanery, and artifice, has usually been considered the primary qualification for such a post. And when we consider the principles, on which the respective governments have required their agents to act, and the extraordinary transactions to which this intercourse has uniformly led, it is not surprising, that no one has been found willing to reveal the dark policy, by which his instructions compelled him to be guided, if his own spirit did not prompt him to it. By the concurrent sanction of all the christian powers, growing out of their mutual jealousies, such has been the system adhered to in treating with the Barbary pirates, that no public agent would dare to unfold and spread it out before the world. Concealment and duplicity were essential parts of the system itself. But the mind and pen of the American Consul General were bound by no such ignoble chains as these ; he has scrutinized deeply, and declared freely what he discovered, and what he thought. The disclosures he has made, and which others will make, by pursuing the track on which he has entered, will afford a key to many parts of European history that are yet hidden. If all the diplomatic proceedings of the christian governments with the Barbary States, Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, could be brought to light, and recorded for the inspection of the world, we doubt whether more signal evidences of the abuse of power, the force of base passions, and the wickedness of rulers, could be collected from the annals of the civilized world.
